

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4353

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 4279

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, (BAKER, RAYMOND W.)

SUBJECT: PROTECTION AND WELFARE: U.S. CITIZEN RAYMOND W. BAKER

REF: A. LAGOS 3011, B. LAGOS 3800, C. LAGOS 4131,
D. LAGOS 4132

1. SUMMARY: BAKER CALLED ON AMBASSADOR APRIL 7 TO RELATE HIS DETENTION

EXPERIENCE. HE EXPECTS CONTINUED HARASSMENT FROM POLICE UNLESS THE
INVESTIGATION CAN BE TURNED OFF BY HIGHER AUTHORITIES. EMBASSY IS
PRESENTING A NOTE TO MEA PROTESTING BAKER'S TREATMENT WHILE IN
DETENTION AND DENIAL OF CONSULAR ACCESS, AND ASKING THAT INVESTIGATION

BE RAPIDLY BROUGHT TO A CONCLUSION. END SUMMARY.

2. RAYMOND W. BAKER CALLED ON AMBASSADOR AFTERNOON OF APRIL 7 TO
RELATE HIS EXPERIENCES WHILE HELD IN DETENTION APRIL 2-6. BAKER
SAID HE HAD BEEN ASKED BY SECURITY POLICE OFFICER PETERS TO
COME TO POLICE STATION ON FRIDAY, APRIL 2. POLICE COMMANDEERED
BAKER'S CAR AND DRIVER TO TAKE HIM TO THE STATION. HE WAS
REQUIRED TO FURNISH THE POLICE HIS PERSONAL CHECKBOOK RECORDS
AND AN AUDIT REPORT OF HIS PERSONALLY-OWNED CONSULTING FIRM,
OVERSEAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (NIGERIA), LTD. BAKER WAS NOT
PERMITTED RETURN HOME THAT EVENING, SPENDING NIGHT ON SOFA AT
POLICE STATION. THE NEXT MORNING BAKER HEARD COMMOTION CAUSED
BY ATTEMPT OF EMBASSY CONSULAR OFFICER TO SEE HIM (REFTEL C). AFTER
CONSULAR OFFICER HAD BEEN EJECTED FROM STATION PREMISES, THE
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POLICE BUNDLED BAKER IN A CAR AND TOOK HIM TO FORCE HEADQUARTERS

WHERE HE SPENT THE NEXT THREE NIGHTS AND THREE AND A HALF DAYS. HE SLEPT ON FLOORS TWO NIGHTS AND ON A DESK TOP ONE NIGHT. HE WAS NOT QUESTIONED SATURDAY OR MONDAY, BUT WAS INTERROGATED AT LENGTH ON SUNDAY BY ANOTHER SECURITY POLICEMAN, EDET. BAKER WAS RELEASED TUESDAY NOON WITHOUT APOLOGIES, BUT WAS TOLD HE SHOULD PROMPTLY REPORT TO POLICE AUTHORITIES IN EVENT OF ANY THREATENING ACTIONS OR STATEMENTS (PRESUMABLY REFERRING TO SACKED KRAFT BAG COMPANY EMPLOYEES WHO HAD INSTIGATED INVESTIGATION INITIALLY.) (REFTEL C).

3. BAKER SAID THE LINE OF QUESTIONING TO WHICH HE WAS SUBJECTED CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED THAT POLICE HAVE REJECTED THE CHARGES OF BAKER'S THREE DISMISSED NIGERIAN EMPLOYEES (REFTELS A&B). BAKER BELIEVES POLICE ARE NOW FOLLOWING ANOTHER TRAIL, ATTEMPTING TO ESTABLISH THAT HE HAS MAINTAINED A NETWORK OF INFORMANTS AND IS A CIA AGENT. IF POLICE COME UP WITH NOTHING SUBSTANTIAL ON THAT TACK, BAKER BELIEVES THEY WILL TRY TO MAKE A CASE THAT HE HAS SMUGGLED

ANTIQUITIES OUT OF COUNTRY OR ILLEGALLY COMMINGLED PERSONAL AND BUSINESS FUNDS.

4. BAKER SAID THE NATURE OF SUNDAY'S INTERROGATION DEMONSTRATED THAT POLICE HAD INTERVIEWED MEMBERS OF THE BOARDS OF DIRECTORS OF HIS COMPANIES. THOSE INTERVIEWED INCLUDED FORMER EAST CENTRAL STATE GOVERNOR ASIKA WHOM BAKER DESCRIBED AS A VERY CLOSE FRIEND. ADDITIONAL NAMES THAT CAME UP IN QUESTIONING INCLUDED FORMER LAGOS STATE GOVERNOR MOBOLAJI JOHNSON AND LAGOS BUSINESSMAN HENRY FAJEMIROKUN AND CHRIS OGUNBANJO. POLICE WERE ALSO INTERESTED IN KNOWING WHOM IN NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT BAKER HAD MET AND ASKED WHETHER HE KNEW ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF DANJUMA (YES), HEAD OF STATE OBASANJO (NO), AND FORMER COMMISSIONER OF DEFENSE BASALLA (NO), AMONG OTHERS. POLICE HAD ALSO INTERVIEWED INDIVIDUALS TO WHOM BAKER HAD WRITTEN CHECKS. THE POLICE ALLEGED THAT HE HAD USED CHECKS TO PAY IS AGENTS. BAKER SAID THAT THE WELL-KNOWN NIGERIAN ARTIST TWINS SEVEN-SEVEN HAD BEEN HELD FOR QUESTIONING BECAUSE BAKER HAD RECENTLY PURCHASED TWO PRINTS FROM HIM.

5. APPARENTLY FROM HIS CHECKBOOK, POLICE HAD ALSO DETERMINED THAT THE BAKERS HAD SENT A SHIPMENT OF PERSONAL EFFECTS TO THE US LAST SUMMER. POLICE ALLEGED BAKERS HAD SMUGGLED ANTIQUITIES OUT

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OF THE COUNTRY. BAKER SAID THAT THE SHIPMENT HAD INCLUDED SOME MASKS AND OTHER ART OBJECTS BUT THAT THE NIGERIAN MUSEUM HAD APPROVED THEIR EXPORT. POLICE TOLD BAKER THAT THEY WERE UNABLE TO CONFIRM HIS STORY FROM MUSEUM RECORDS. POLICE ALSO ASKED BAKER ABOUT MOVEMENT OF FUNDS BETWEEN HIS PERSONAL ACCOUNT AND THAT OF HIS CONSULTING FIRM. BAKER TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT, IN FACT, FUNDS HAD PROBABLY BEEN OCCASIONALLY COMMINGLED. BAKER TOLD POLICE THAT IT WAS NOT ILLEGAL FOR HIM TO LOAN HIS OWN COMPANY MONEY AT INTEREST.

6. BAKER RELATED THAT BOTH HIS STEWARD AND COOK HAD BEEN QUESTIONED EXTENSIVELY BY POLICE. THEY HAD BEEN ASKED WHO BAKER REGULARLY SAW, HOW HE TREATED SERVANTS, WHY MRS. BAKER HAD LEFT THE COUNTRY, AND ABOUT BAKER'S SEX LIFE SINCE HER DEPARTURE. THEY WERE ALSO QUESTIONED CLOSELY ABOUT BAKER'S ACTIVITIES AND MOVEMENTS ON FEBRUARY 13 (DAY OF MUHAMMED'S ASSASSINATION) AND ON DAYS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING AND FOLLOWING. BAKER SAID THAT SOME MEN CALLING THEMSELVES "REPAIRMEN" HAD WORKED ON HIS TELEPHONE LINES DURING HIS DETENTION. HE AS DISCOVERED THAT HIS PHONE LINE HAS BEEN REPAIRED SO THAT IT RUNS ACROSS THE STREET TO A BUILDING WHERE HE IS CONVINCED HIS PHONE CONVERSATIONS ARE BEING RECORDED.

7. BAKER BELIEVES POLICE WILL ULTIMATELY ATTEMPT TO DEPORT HIM ON CHARGES OF SMUGGLING OR ILLEGAL ACCOUNTING PRACTICES IF THEY CANNOT MANUFACTURE A CREDIBLE SPY CHARGE. HE IS CONVINCED THAT IN ORDER TO TURN OFF THE POLICE INVESTIGATIONS AND HARASSMENT HE MUST "POLITICIZE" THE SITUATION BY MAKING HIGH LEVEL MILITARY AND OTHER FMG OFFICIALS AWARE OF HIS CASE. HIS LAWYER HAS ALREADY BEGUN THIS PROCESS. BAKER ALSO HOPES TO WORK THROUGH PERSONAL AND BUSINESS FRIENDS IN IBADAN TO ENGAGE THE ATTENTION OF OYO STATE GOVERNOR AND THROUGH HIM, OF DODAN BARRACKS.

8. COMMENT: GIVEN CURRENT XENOPHOBIA IN COUNTRY AND REPEATED CALLS FOR "VIGILANCE," BAKER'S ASSERTION THAT NIGERIAN POLICE ARE LOOKING FOR A "FOREIGN SPY" MAY WELL BE VALID. PRESS HAS BEEN FULL OF ALLEGATIONS OF CIA INVOLVEMENT IN FEBRUARY ABORTIVE COUP. EVEN THOUGH CARGES OF BAKER'S FORMER EMPLOYEES APPARENTLY HAVE BEEN DISCARDED, IT MAY BE THAT INVESTIGATION HAS TAKEN ON MOMENTUM OF ITS OWN WITHIN OVER-ZEALOUS POLICE HIERARCHY. IN ADDITION, POLICE CONSCIOUSLY OR UNCONSCIOUSLY MAY BE SEEKING REFURBISH OWN POOR IMAGE IN WAKE OF ABORTIVE COUP AND QUITE WILLING USE BAKER AS SCAPEGOAT FOR THIS PURPOSE. AMBASSADOR
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TOLD BAKER HE WILL DOCUMENT PREVIOUS ORAL INTERVENTIONS WITH WRITTEN PROTEST OF BAKER'S TREATMENT WHILE IN DETENTION AND REFUSAL OF POLICE TO ACCORD CONSULAR ACCESS. AMBASSADOR WILL ALSO REQUEST THAT FMG AUTHORITIES RAPIDLY CONCLUDE THE CASE SINCE PROTRACTED INVESTIGATION WOULD IN EMBASSY'S VIEW CONSTITUTE UNWARRANTED HARASSMENT OF BAKER AND RISK ADDITIONAL UNFAVORABLE REPERCUSSIONS ON CLIMATE FOR US BUSINESSMEN IN NIGERIA.
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